



7 MORE IMMUTABLE RULES OF SUCCESSFUL TOURISM

Presented by Roger Brooks



From the book *The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism* by Roger Brooks & Maury Forman

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PLEASE NOTE: While the handout is all text, the workshop includes dozens of photos, video clips, case histories, examples, and anecdotal insights. So don't panic! The 15 Rules are educational, entertaining, and insightful.

RULE #1

THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS IS A GOOD TIME

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

- You will be worth a special trip if you can keep the visitor busy, with activities that cater to them, four times longer than it takes them to get there.
- This is why partnerships are so important. The more you have to offer collectively, the further people will drive and the longer they will stay.
- What you have to offer will determine who your market is. If people from the major market areas must drive 2 hours to visit you, do you have activities (that will appeal to them) to keep them busy for 8 hours? If not, maybe you're not ready to market to that area.
- Visitors don't stay within boundaries and don't care about counties or even cities. They want activities, experiences.

RULE #2

RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRE MORE THAN ONE PERSON

THE RULE OF PARTNERSHIPS

- The more you have to offer, collectively, the further people will drive to visit you.
- Your branding effort should include the big picture.
- Look at antique malls - by grouping competitors together, all do more business and attract more customers.
- Partnerships require more than just the local destination marketing organization. They are a group of communities and businesses working together.

RULE #3

CRITICAL MASS IS NOT JUST A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

THE RULE OF CONVENIENCE

- The #1 visitor activity in the world is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting.
- Critical mass is critical to success: visitor-oriented retail should be in a compact setting. Separate "neighborhood retail" from "visitor retail."
- Average rule of thumb for rural communities: nine retail stores, four dining/treats facilities.

RULE #4

GHOST STORIES MAKE THE CAMPFIRE MEMORABLE

THE RULE OF TELLING STORIES

- Museums and interpretive centers should ALWAYS tell stories, not just display artifacts.
- Visitors remember stories, and stories will hold them longer, translating to additional spending.
- Artifacts are simply a been-there, done-that experience.

RULE #5

DON'T LET YOUR LAST OPPORTUNITY BECOME A LOST OPPORTUNITY

THE RULE OF CLOSING THE SALE

- The primary "call to action" in advertising is to get potential customers to call and get a brochure or log on to your website. Your website and printed materials MUST be good enough to close the sale. Otherwise your advertising effort is largely wasted.

NOTES & COMMENTS:

- Coming in second won't bring visitors and their cash to you.
- Look at the top three inches of your rack brochure. Use yellows on a dark background.
- Sell the experience.

RULE #6

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING

THE RULE OF WEBSITES

- 94% of people with internet access use it to plan their vacations, conferences, business trips, and getaways. 68% of all households have access to the internet.
- How does your website stack up? Can they find you?
- 70% of web users never go past the first two pages of search results. More than half rarely go past the first page. Purchase "keyword sponsorships" on Google and Yahoo! search engines. Go to www.adwords.com (Google), and www.overture.com (Yahoo! and others).
- Use keywords that sell experiences more than cities, counties and locations.
- Develop a database driven e-marketing program.
- Make sure your marketing materials are available for viewing online and available for download as PDF files. Make sure they are printable on 8.5"x11" paper.
- Your website should be your number one marketing priority. It MUST be good enough to close the sale. Less than 5% of all visitors will ever call a visitor information center or find brochures promoting the area.
- Do NOT use gimmicks - flashing icons, music, etc.
- Use high-quality professional photography (experiences not just scenic vistas), even high quality short video clips.
- Promote specific businesses that are unique to the area.
- Website viewers scan the pages - use bullet points and brief paragraphs as teasers.

RULE #7

SUCCESS BEGINS WITH A GOOD ARCHITECT

THE RULE OF PLANNING

- Create a Tourism Development, Branding & Marketing Plan - an action plan with detailed recommendations.
- The plan should include: Product development, upgrades and improvements, repositioning and branding, attractions and events, wayfinding, signage and gateways, visitor amenities and services, critical mass, beautification, marketing and public relations, public/private partnerships, recruitment, funding and budgets, organizational development (who does what).
- The plan should be compatible with your community's existing goals, plans and efforts.



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The full-color book, The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism, includes dozens of photos, examples, case histories, and more information about each of these rules. It is available for \$14.95 and can be ordered on-line at www.kendallhunt.com (in the top left corner is a "search" box. Type in "25 Immutable Rules" and it will take you to the order page, or you can call toll-free, 1800-228-0810.